THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) and (b) Consequent to the lapsing of Treaties of Trade and Transit simultaneously on March 23, 1989, Government have invited His Majesty's Government of Nepal for negotiations on a single unified treaty. Pending negotiations, and with a view to ensuring smooth movement of goods between India and Nepal, Government have kept open two transit points on Indo-Nepal border for bilateral and third country trade. In addition, two transit points exclusively for Nepal's trade with Bangladesh and Bhutan have been allowed to continue as heretofore.

Child marriages

1965. SHRI P. N. SUKUL:

SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards reports which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated the 13th March, 1989 captioned 'Child marriage still rampant';

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) what steps are being taken by Government to curb this social evil, particularly, in the context of Government's policy of curbing population growth in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS AND WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Child Marriage Restraint Act prescribes 18 as the age of marriage for Girls and 21 for boys. The National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000 AD emphasises the need to implement the present law effectively. It also suggests creating a social consciousness for delaying marriage at least upto the minimum age mentioned in the above Act. The NPP also recommends that it is necessary to provide alternative options to early marriage and that this can be done by a mix of education and employment opportunities and enforcement of the law.

The Department funds programmes/media campaigns to fight this social evil through the Social Welfare Board and voluntary organisations.

Allocation for implementation of new Education Policy

1966. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what percentage of the national income was being spent annually when the new Education Policy was formulated and by what percentage the allocation was raised for the implementation of the programme under the new Education Policy;

(b) what is the allocation, if any, made for the policy in 1988-89 and the names of the State Government which have failed to raise the resources to meet their part of the commitment; and

(c) in what manner Government think that target of universal elementary education by 1995 is likely to be achieved with the present rate of progress and inadequate funds?